

## HUGE TURNOUT FOR 3RD UPPER IOWA RIVER CLEANUP

by Michael Dhar

Posted: *October 1, 2004*

CRESCO - Framed by towering yellow cliffs and a clear blue sky, 75 volunteers set out Saturday, Sept. 25 for the third annual Upper Iowa River Cleanup. This year's turnout dwarfed previous totals-only about 20 people joined each of the first two outings.

The Cleanup sends environmentally conscious volunteers out with canoes and trash bags to remove refuse from the river. This year, two groups covered about 10 miles of river each and collected two pickup loads of garbage.

"As far as the amount of stuff cleaned up, it went great," said Richard Kittelson, program coordinator and a forester with Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation and Development (RC and D). "We got a lot of stuff, just piles of it."

Volunteers dug 10 tires, a clothes dryer, a microwave, a steel farm gate, five garbage bags full of bottles and cans, an upholstered chair and much more from the river. Logging 965 hours worth of labor and travel time, the volunteers collected a total of 1,300 pounds of trash.

"This is the best river in the state because the bluffs are just so beautiful and the water is just so clear," said volunteer Robin Fortney of Des Moines. "I think river cleanups are a really wonderful way to get to know a river. And you feel good when it's all over."



The Upper Iowa program began two years ago when Chimney Rock Canoe Rental and Campground owner/operator Deb Keefe collaborated with the Iowa DNR. This year's turnout - including volunteers from four states - resulted from greater publicity and cooperation from the Northeast Iowa RC and D, organizers said.

The turnout posed a unique challenge for planners and extended the length of the float to eight hours. Organizers are working on involving more local outfitters and support staff next year, tackling a shorter section of river and providing signs along the route.

This year's volunteers included roughly 30 college students from Iowa State University and Luther College, as well as several participants from this summer's Project A.W.A.R.E., a weeklong cleanup of the Des Moines River watershed. Volunteers from the Palisades Chapter of the Isaac Walton League also attended.

The event ended with a potluck dinner and a prize drawing - prizes included a child's rod and reel, sweatshirts, a multi-purpose tool, and local pizza and sandwich coupons.

**Event donors:** Food & Drink: both Casey's of Decorah, Fareway Grocery, K&S Grocery, Kwik Trip of Decorah, Mike's Fruit Market, Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co., Subway of Decorah, Wal-Mart of Decorah

**Door Prizes:** Cabela's of Prairie du Chien, Fred Carlson Co., Happy Joe's Pizza & Ice Cream Parlor, Mabe's Pizza, NE IA Resource Conservation & Development, Inc, Norby's of Decorah, O'Henry's Stitches & Prints of Cresco, Oneota Lanes, Ozzie's Outdoors, Pizza Hut of Decorah, RV Sales & Service of Cresco, Subway of Cresco, Upper Iowa Marine, Valley Inn of Kendallville, Wal-Mart of Decorah

### **Recyclers:**

Clayton County Recycling, Goodyear Decorah Tire, McCaffrey Scrap Metal, Rockweiler's Appliance, Sprectum Recycling

